

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00

INRE-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 INR-09 PA-03 PRS-01

DPW-01 IO-12 AID-20 OMB-01 T-03 RSR-01 /135 W

----- 082477

O R 171146 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3094

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL UDORN

USDEL FRANCE

USIA WASHDC

SECDEF

DIRNSA FT GG MEADE MD

CINCPAC

CINCUSARPAC HAWAII

CDRUSMACV

COMUSMACTHAI

DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI

CDR USSAG NKP

DEPCDR 7/13 AF

CDR 7 TH RRFS RAMASUN THAI

CDR 7 ACCS KORAT

DODSPECREP BANGKOK

DODSPECREP NKP

CHSPECACTS BKK

56 SOW NKP

432 TRW UDORN

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CDR JCRC NKP
ARMA/ AIRA VTN LAOS
ARMA/ AIRA SVK LAOS
C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1976

CINCPAC FOR POLAD; MACV FOR COMMAND CENTER AND J3 08; 7/13 AF,
432 TRW AND 56 SOW FOR DO/ DI; MACTHAI FOR J2 AND PAO

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PINT, PFOR, LA
SUBJECT: LAO SITUATION REPORT - MARCH 17

: VIENTIANE 1952

BEGIN SUMMARY: MILITARY - MODERATE INCREASE IN GROUND ACTIVITY NOTED DURING PERIOD 15-16 MARCH. THERE WERE THREE MAJOR INCIDENTS: FRIENDS WITHSTOOD TWO SHARP ASSAULTS SOUTH OF THAKHEK, BUT WERE FORCED TO WITHDRAW AFTER HEAVY ENEMY ATTACK JUST SOUTHWEST OF CENTRAL BOLOVENS PLATEAU TOWN OF PAKSONG. THERE WERE ALSO TEN MINOR SCATTERED CLASHES AND EXCHANGES OF FIRE. FRIENDS MADE NO PROGRESS AROUND CONTESTED VILLAGE NORTHEAST OF KHONG SEDONE. FRIENDLY FORCES WERE EXTRACTED FROM AREA NORTH OF MUONG SOUI WITHOUT INCIDENT. RLAF FLEW 28 T-28 SORTIES ON 16 MARCH, ALL RELATED TO SUPPORT OF TROOPS IN CONTACT. T-28'S IN MR- I WERE ORDERED TO STAND DOWN. ONLY REPORTED ARTILLERY EXPENDITURE ON 14 MARCH WAS WOUTH OF THAKHEK (225 ROUNDS). POLITICAL - POLITICAL GROUP MEETING MARCH 16 REPORTEDLY MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS. RLG PLANNING FOR NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH 11 MINISTRIES. END SUMMARY.

1. SECTION I - OBSERVANCE OF CEASEFIRE

A. MR I: NO GROUND OR AIR ACTION REPORTED. RLAF T-28'S ARE ON STAND- DOWN ORDER FROM THEIR COMMANDER.

B. MR II: THERE WERE THREE MINOR GROUND ACTIONS, A PATROL CLASH SOUTH OF BOUAM LONG ON 15 MARCH (TWO FRIENDLY MIA, TWO ENEMY KIA) AND TWO BRIEF FIREFIGHTS NEAR THA VIANG ON 16 MARCH (NO CASUALTIES). NORTHWEST OF PDJ, TROOPS THAT ENEMY DROVE AWAY FROM NORTHERN APPROACH TO MUONG SOUI WERE EXFILTRATED BY AIR AMERICA HELICOPTERS WITHOUT INCIDENT. RLAF FLEW NO ORDNANCE- EXPENDING T-28 SORTIES ON 16 MARCH.
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C. MR III: FIGHTING CONTINUED SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST OF THAKHEK, WHERE TWO ENEMY- INITIATED GROUND ATTACKS, SUPPORTED BY MORTAR FIRE, WERE REPULSED. AFTERNOON 15 MARCH (0830 Z), ESTIMATED ENEMY BATTALION ATTACKED POSITION 16 KM SOUTH OF THAKHEK AT VE 825 085 (THREE FRIENDLY WIA). MORNING 16 MARCH (152330 Z), ESTIMATED TWO ENEMY COMPANIES ATTACKED POSITION 12 KM SOUTH OF THAKHEK AT VE 833 120 (NO CASUALTIES). THERE WERE ALSO TWO MINOR CLASHES WELL TO THE EAST SOUTHEAST OF THAKHEK ON 15 MARCH (ESTIMATED FOUR ENEMY CASUALTIES). ONE CLASH OCCURRED NORTH OF DONG HENE ON 16 MARCH (DETAILS UNAVAILABLE). THERE WAS ONE CLASH WELL EAST OF KENGKOK ON 15 MARCH (NO CASUALTIES). RLAF FLEW EIGHT T-28 SORTIES ON 16 MARCH, FOUR AGAINST SDEMY TROOPS SOUTH OF THAKHEK AND FOUR IN SUPPORT OF TROOPS IN CONTACT NORTH OF DONG HENE (ONE MORTAR DAMAGED).

D. MR IV: ENEMY CLEARED SMALL FRIENDLY SALIENT APPROX FIVE KM SOUTHWEST OF PAKSONG VICINITY XB 273 766, ON CENTRAL BOLOVENS PLATEAU, WITH ESTIMATED BATTALION- SIZE ATTACK EVENING 16 MARCH (1200 Z); FRIENDS WITHDREW ONE KM WITH UNKNOWN CASUALTIES. THERE WERE TWO MINOR INCIDENTS IN THE KHONG SEDONE AREA: ONE CLASH OCCURRED NEAR CONTESTED VILLAGE 28 KM NORTHEAST OF KHONG SEDONE ON 16 MARCH (ONE FRIENDLY WIA). CLASH APPROX 35 KM NORTHWEST OF THE TOWN WOUNDED ONE FRIEND ON 16 MARCH. RLAF FLEW 14 T-28 SORTIES ON 16 MARCH, ALL IN SUPPORT OF TROOPS IN CONTACT IN FOREGOING AREAS (TWO SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS), AND TWO AC-47 SORTIES PREVIOUS NIGHT IN SUPPORT OF PAKSONG TROOPS.

E. MR V: ONLY GROUND ACTION WAS MINOR CLASH APPROX 30 KM NORTHWEST OF BORIKHANE ON 16 MARCH (ONE ENEMY KAI, ONE AK-47 CAPTURED). RLAF FLEW SIX T-28 SORTIES ON 16 MARCH, ALL IN SUPPORT OF FOREGOING ACTION. PATROLS NORTHEAST AND SOUTH OF SALA PHOU KHOUN FOUND TWO ENEMY CACHES CONTAINING ONE RECOILLESS , 50 ROUNDS ROCKET/ MORTAR AMMO AND SIX CASES MACHINE GUN AMMO.

F. COUNT OF CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS: RLG DEFMIN ANNOUNCED SIX ADDITIONAL ENEMY VIOLATIONS, BRINGING TOTAL TO 248 AS OF MORNING 15 MARCH. OUR COUNT OF GROUND ACTIONS INITIATED BY BOTH SIDES SHOWS 53 MAJOR AND 329 MINOR INCIDENTS THROUGH 14 MARCH.

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2. SECTION II - POLITICAL SITUATION

A. AFTER MARCH 16 MEETING OF JOINING RLG/ LPF POLITICAL SUB-COMMITTEE, RLG DELEGATION SPOKESMAN SAID THAT MEETING PROCEEDED WITH " GOOD UNDERSTANDING AND SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS," AND THAT

PROBLEMS OF FORMING JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL AND PROVIDING FOR SECURITY OF VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG WERE " MOSTLY SETTLED AND READY FOR SIGNATURE." HE ADDED THAT, IN HIS OPINION, " A NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT WILL CERTAINLY BE FORMED BY MARCH 23."

B. AT DINNER, MARCH 16, PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER CABINET MEMBERS DISCUSSED WITH DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION THE RLG' S PLANS FOR NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE 11 MINISTRIES. IN SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT, SOUVANNA HIMSELF, IN ADDITION TO BEING PRIME MINISTER, IS CONTEMPLATING HOLDING SINGLE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS. MOST MINISTERS THOUGHT NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FORMED BY MARCH 23 DEADLINE; BUT ALL FAULTED LPF FOR FAILING TO SEND SPECIAL ADVISOR PHOUMI VONGVICHIT BACK TO VIENTIANE, MAINTAINING INSTEAD A TEAM HERE WHICH CANNOT MAKE DECISIONS. GODLEY

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